

# James 2:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

## Analysis

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**Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.** Faith without works is dead (nekra, νεκρά). James pronounces verdict: such faith lacks life, like a corpse lacking breath. Works are not the cause but the evidence of life. Living faith inevitably breathes obedience.

This complements Paul's teaching that we are created in Christ for good works (Ephesians 2:10). Reformed theology affirms that regeneration produces fruit; fruitless faith indicates spiritual death.

## Historical Context

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In persecuted communities, some professed faith to avoid conflict yet failed to aid suffering believers. James draws a line: genuine discipleship entails costly love. Early church catechesis used James 2 to test candidates before baptism.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. What evidence shows your faith is alive?
2. Where do you need the Spirit to revive lifeless areas of obedience?
3. How can community help you cultivate living faith?

## Interlinear Text

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οὕτως καὶ ἡ πίστις ἐὰν μὴ ἔργα ἔχη νεκρά ἐστιν  
**so** **Even** G3588 **faith** G1437 G3361 **works** **it hath** **dead** **is**  
G3779 G2532 G4102 G2041 G2192 G3498 G2076

καθ' ἑαυτήν  
**being alone** G1438  
G2596

## Additional Cross-References

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**James 2:26** (Faith): For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

**James 2:14** (Faith): What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

**1 Corinthians 13:13** (Faith): And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

**1 Timothy 1:5** (Faith): Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

**1 Thessalonians 1:3** (Faith): Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;